

Planning and DSO Merge



On April 18, 2011, the Planning and Community Development Department merged with the Development Services Office to create the new department of Planning and Development Services (PDS).

PDS is responsible for comprehensive long range planning, zoning, subdivision platting, site plan review services, sign review, historic preservation and code enforcement. The merger of the two departments was recommended by City Manager, Steve Norwood, to consolidate all planning and development review services under one department head. Peter Wysocki, Planning and Development Services Director, will be responsible for overseeing all planning and development review activities for the city.

The Planning and Development Services Department works to improve the built environment and quality of life in Round Rock

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Landscape and Tree Protection Ordinance Amendments Are Underway

Part of what makes Round Rock a desirable community to live, work and play is the beauty and health of its built environment.

With this in mind, the City has regulations that require all newly developed commercial sites to install landscaped areas which include a minimum number of trees, shrubs and groundcovers. Irrigation is also required in order to keep it all green and growing. The existing landscape section of the City's Zoning Ordinance along with the Tree Protection and Preservation Ordinance, adopted in 2003, and 2005, respectively, have served the city and its residents well by ensuring a variety of plantings throughout the city.

Periodically, ordinances need to be evaluated to reflect recent trends in development and to incorporate the latest best practices. By doing this, we can be confident that our regulations will yield quality projects. In addition, the current landscape and tree protection ordinances need to be reviewed in light of the City Council's recently adopted "Development Philosophy" which places emphasis on creativity and flexibility. The City Council would like to adopt development regulations that recognize the benefits of creativity, while clearly defining expected standards of quality.

In addition to improving community appearance, landscaping and tree protection ordinances should include provisions that foster the sustainability of a site. These can include provisions that allow the use of landscape areas for collecting rain water run off, minimize heat island effects in parking lots, and allow xeriscaping.

Finally, our current landscape and tree protection ordinances were developed with typical suburban or "greenfield" development patterns in mind. As our city ages, we need to address landscaping and tree protection in areas that will soon be redeveloped, such as the downtown and older commercial strip centers.

The City is in the beginning stages of reviewing these ordinances. Both the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council will establish broad policies to guide staff in preparing the ordinance amendments. A technical advisory committee consisting of design professionals and arborists has been assembled to review the technical aspects of the ordinance. A draft ordinance will be available for review this fall.

If you would like more information about the update of these ordinances, please contact the Planning and Development Services Department at 512-218-5428.



Local Legends

Nominate Round Rock's 2011 Local Legends before July 22nd

The Planning and Development Services Department is accepting nominations for the City of Round Rock's 2011 Local Legend Award Program until July 22nd. The Local Legend Award Program was established in 1990 as part of the City's Historic Preservation Program.

Anyone can nominate an individual or group for the award, which honors citizens who have had a positive and lasting impact on the culture, development, and history of our community. Previous award winners have included Joe Lee Johnson, The Domino Players, Thomas Oatts, and Lone Star Bakery. Last year's award recipients included Judy McLeod, Francinn and Martin Parker, Dr. Robert Peters, and Nancy and Virg Rabb.

Winners will be selected based on the following criteria: importance to the City's founding or growth; association with an historic place or event; legacy of service to the community; and/or personal achievements that have brought honor and distinction to the nominee and to the City of Round Rock.

Local Legend honorees are selected by the Historic Preservation Commission. The Commission is assisted by a citizen volunteer committee, which reviews and recommends nominations. Award recipients will be honored by the City Council in Fall 2011.

If you would like to nominate someone for the Local Legend award, please submit a nomination form or the following information: your name and contact information, the nominee's name and contact information (if available), and a brief description of achievements related to the criteria listed above. Nomination forms are available on-line at www.roundrocktexas.gov/locallegend.

Nominations may be sent via email to locallegend@round-rock.tx.us or by postal mail to:

Local Legend Award Nominations
The Historic Preservation Commission
c/o Planning and Development Services Department
301 W. Bagdad Avenue, Suite 210
Round Rock, TX 78664

Information about this program and a complete list of past recipients is available on the City's website at www.roundrocktexas.gov/locallegend.



(Departments Merge — continued from pg. 1)

by establishing and implementing quality standards for new development, and by encouraging maintenance, preservation and reinvestment in older parts of the city.

The Planning and Development Services Department operates under the guidance of the City's Development Philosophy which emphasizes customer service to facilitate the timely review and approval of projects, as well as ensuring that stakeholders are included in the development of regulatory ordinances. In short, the Development Philosophy is to "Make it Happen." PDS prides itself on ensuring that development projects are handled in a professional, timely, consistent, and accurate manner. The Department's goal is to build a partnership with its customers, including design professional, businesses, residents and community stakeholders. We welcome the opportunity to discuss any concerns you may have. Our customers and making Round Rock as best as it can be are our top priorities!

Contact information for the new department remains unchanged. Development applications will continue to be accepted at the McConico Building, 301 W. Bagdad Avenue, Suite 140.

Historic Preservation Project Results in Restoration Rather Than Replacement of Windows

Between 1900-1911, the Round Rock Broom Factory conducted its operations in the building located at 100 E. Main Street. The building was constructed in 1880, prior to the Broom Factory locating there. The Broom Factory was one of the City's major employers and brought Round Rock widespread recognition after it received a gold medal for its broom design at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis.



Round Rock Broom Factory, circa 1900

The current property owner, Rik Morris, recently completed a significant window restoration project. The building is located in the downtown "Round Rock Commercial Historic District", which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The building is also a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL – 1970). Through the RTHL designation, the Texas Historical Commission, the state agency for historic preservation, recognizes buildings that are important to Texas' history.

The building's architecture is described as an Italianate two-part commercial block building constructed of limestone with four wooden double doors set into half-round arched openings on the ground floor. The building has tall four pane over four pane windows. The windows on the second floor include segmentally arched hoods with center keystones.

The building is also a local landmark in Round Rock, which means that changes to the exterior of the property are reviewed by the Round Rock Historic Preservation Commission. This property is also inspected annually by members of the City's Historic Preservation Commission for participation in the City's tax exemption program for historic properties. It was noted during the 2010 tax exemption inspection that many of the wooden window casings were deteriorating.

After learning that his windows needed repairs, Mr. Morris thought that it would be best to replace the windows in the building. City staff recommended that, in accordance with its "Design Guidelines for Historic Commercial Districts & Properties", the original windows should be retained if possible.

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"After" photo of restored window at 100 E. Main Street

The project is now complete and the window restoration cost was less than replacing the windows. According to Mr. Morris, the windows should last for at least twenty years.

asbestos and lead testing had to be completed to determine if hazardous materials were present. Fortunately, neither asbestos nor lead was found, most likely because the windows had been stripped previously during a major renovation to the building in 1985.

The City's Historic Preservation Commission praised the efforts of Mr. Morris to preserve the existing windows rather than replacing them. The National Trust for Historic Preservation provides some excellent information on why building owners should consider restoring their historic windows: <http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/weatherization/windows/>. In addition, new methods to improve energy efficiency and dampen noise for older windows are available. Products like magnetic insulation window covers attached to the inside frame of a window, provide alternatives to window replacement.

Staff at Planning and Development Services is always available to discuss proposed projects for older and historic buildings. For more information, visit: www.roundrocktexas.gov/historicpreservation.

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In his research for this project, Mr. Morris quickly found out that new windows would need to be custom made because of their large size. Consequently, the cost would be very high.

Because this property is a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, Mr. Morris was able to receive technical preservation assistance from the Texas Historical Commission which also strongly discouraged the replacement of the windows. The Texas Historical Commission's objective when reviewing a project is to retain the historical integrity of buildings.

In the end, the decision was made by Mr. Morris to restore the windows currently in place. The proposed plan to restore the windows met the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* and is appropriate for this designated historic building. Eulenfeld Construction of Taylor was selected as the

contractor after taking competitive bids. The awnings had to be removed while work was being completed, and the contractor had to repair and/or reconstruct the wooden window frames so that new glazing could be applied.

The contractor noted that the old-growth wood found in the windows is much more durable than today's wood, so an effort was made to use seasoned wood for any parts of the windows that needed to be rebuilt. The windows were then primed and painted. Before the work could begin,

How to Testify at a Public Hearing

A Guide to Preparing Effective Testimony

The Public Hearing Process

All zoning, concept plan, and replat applications are required to go through a public hearing. The hearing process is designed to alert city leaders to public concerns and to encourage citizen participation on development issues. The Planning and Development Services Department regularly presents information before the Planning & Zoning Commission, the Historic Preservation Commission, the Zoning Board of Adjustments and the City Council.

Your input is vital to the decision making process. If you have concerns about a project in your neighborhood or want to show your support for a particular item, get involved! You don't need to be a polished public speaker, or even a great writer to be heard. Following the points below will help you organize your ideas and enhance your testimony.



Remember Your Objective

Your goal is to persuade decision makers to acknowledge your concerns about a project. Angering, alienating or antagonizing the group you want to influence will not help your cause. The best way to present your ideas is with testimony that is clear and informed.

Be Informed

Your testimony gains credibility if it is well researched. Get a copy of the staff report (or the plan, proposed ordinance or other available pertinent materials) for the project, and read it before preparing your testimony.

Although passion, exhortation or pleading by citizens can make a meeting very emotional and adversarial, it is unlikely that officials will make decisions that violate or are inconsistent with state or city codes.

However, ordinances can be changed. If you believe there is an ordinance that needs to be changed, organize to have it amended.

Speak to the Point

Public officials have heard testimony from hundreds of people. They're grateful when testimony is pertinent, well organized and directly regards the matter at hand.

Long stories, lectures on philosophy, or abstract complaints about generalities are usually a poor use of time, since the immediate problem is for the decision makers to choose a course of action to take on a specific question.

State Your Recommendations

When you testify, be sure to include your recommendations for resolving the situation. Be specific: don't leave officials guessing about what it was you wanted them to do.

Be Bold

You don't need to be an architect, engineer or planning professional to provide insightful testimony. Don't worry if you're not a great writer or public speaker; just become informed, get involved, and express your opinion.

Be Heard

Testimony can be either presented orally or in writing. Each method is given attention by officials.

Be Reasonable

Public officials must balance the views, interests and proposals of all parties involved, and find the best course for serving the overall public good.

While it is your obligation to present your own interests, remember there may be compelling interests or constraints on many facets of a project. Be prepared to occasionally compromise.

If you have questions or need clarification on an issue, contact the Planning & Development Services Department at 218-5428 and ask to speak with the Planner or Engineer working on the project.

Planning and Development Services Department
301 West Bagdad, Suite 210
Round Rock, Texas 78664
Phone 512.218.5428 * Fax 512.218.3286
www.roundrocktexas.gov
Peter Wysocki, Director